

REMARKS

The Examiner is thanked for the Official Action dated July 09, 2003. This amendment and request for reconsideration is intended to be fully responsive thereto.

Claims 10 and 17 were objected to for minor informalities which have been corrected by the above amendment.

Claims 8 and 9 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph for containing indefinite claim language. The claims have been amended in accordance with the Examiner's comments. With respect to claim 9, Applicant notes that the peripheral portion (10a) constitutes or functions as a Belleville ring – but this Belleville ring was incorrectly referenced as element 'B'. This element is not the same as Belleville assistance ring (B); instead, it refers to the function of the peripheral portion (10a). The claims are now believed to be in conformance with 35 U.S.C. 112. No new matter has been entered.

Claims 1-4, 24 and 25 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by Lebas et al. '684. Claims 1 and 2 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Weidinger '881. These rejections are respectfully traversed in view of the above amendment and the following remarks.


Lebas et al '684 and Weidinger '881 do not describe a mechanism recited in claim 1. In the prior art, the assistance ring always bears, on one hand, on the diaphragm and, on the other hand, on the cover. See Lebas et al. '684 and Weidinger '881. In other words, the assistance ring is mounted without clearance and prestressed in order to avoid being subjected to vibrations (which could be a source of noise). But such prestress causes the assistance ring to exert on the diaphragm a force of opposite direction which affects the axial charge exerted by the diaphragm on the pressure plate when the clutch is engaged. Moreover, without this prestress, the

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assistance ring would not, in a disengaged state, bear on the diaphragm and then generate noise under vibrations.

It is respectfully submitted that the above amendments and comments resolve all outstanding issues and place this application in condition for allowance. Should the Examiner believe additional discussion would advance the prosecution of the present application, they are invited to contact the undersigned at the local telephone number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,

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